And The Ritual Repeated

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And The Ritual Repeated

by saintsavage

Summary

What if it was Hannibal, and not Will, who fell back in time?

Notes

Same ages as the previous part in this series. So Mischa is 5, Hannibal is 17, Will is 10.

Italics - Lithuanian
Regular Text - English

See the end of the work for more notes

Rising As New Gods

Snow. Strange to think that's what he acknowledged first, out of everything. Later he will wonder at it, turn the thought over in his mind with careful consideration before deciding that it isn't so strange, after all. His sense of smell has always been very keen, it seems right that it be the first real thought he had in this strange new life. But that comes later. First, there is snow, and then, then he freezes at the warm weight of a body curled against his side.

A body that hadn't been there for decades.

This is it then, the dance has ended and now we're here, rising in the underworld. As new gods. Yet even as he thinks it, stubbornly refusing to open his eyes because he can't face her, he *can't*... Hannibal knows this cannot be the end. To begin with, he can't feel Will. At all. The wrongness of that stings, sharp enough to pry his eyes open to confront whatever truth there is to face. I want no part of an afterlife without him in it.

But there is no fire, no horrorshow, no demons to torment his soul. Instead *she's* there, breathing softly, her favorite, well-worn blanket tangled in her sturdy little legs. It's something she always dragged along with her, wherever she went, but especially during the times she had snuck into his room in the night. *Mischa*.

Of everything he had expected to feel, should the teacup come back together… it wasn't the crushing, overwhelming devastation at the mere sight of her. There are too many trains of thoughts racing through the labyrinth of his mind, he cannot track them and doesn't have a care to, not when she's *there* and *alive* and more vibrant to him than the sun. Than oceans crossed and all the many, many lives he's taken.

Later, later he'll acknowledge that he knew the truth, even if it was an impossible one. He'd come to the conclusion seconds after he'd set eyes upon her, but it hurt too much to contemplate.

Instead all of his attention was riveted to the rise and fall of her chest. The way she snored, a kittenish sound, small and sweet, that managed to feel like claws in his skin. The intensity of everything he was feeling - the rushing, brutal high of slaying Dolarhyde with Will, the acceptance of their inevitable fall, and now this, this-

Timidly, he finds himself reaching out, distantly appalled at how unsteady his hands are. He's *trembling*. But it doesn't matter, because it's *Mischa*. She's *alive* and… this is real. Mischa is alive.

When his fingers finally make contact, running through the delicate baby curls at her brow, he hears a wretched sound. Something frail and hurting, like a sort of keening sob, and he's startled to realize it's *him*, that he's the one making that awful, hurt sound. Like something dying deep in the woods.

Whatever has happened, it feels real. It has to be real because he *remembers* this moment. He remembers all of their mornings together, hoarding them in his mind because those memories were the most precious treasure he owned. He kept them safe in a vault deep within the palace he'd constructed in his mind, just for them.

A vault that's been thrown wide open now, bringing with it all it's perfect clarity, sharpening the edges and chasing away the blur that time had inevitably brought to them. She'd had a cold all week, was grumpy and sullen about it too, insisting she was well enough to play outside in the gardens. That morning she'd crawled into his bed and collapsed against his knees, like she often did. It made her feel secure, safe in the knowledge that her brother would watch over her.

The night before she'd pitched a royal fit over being told that, once again, she couldn't just move her bed into Hannibal's room. When their mother had softly explained that omegas needed special rooms, that she was a big girl, Mischa had actually stomped her darling foot, lower lip pushed out sulkily. She was so furious! Lovely and unbearably precious to him. He'd laughed and led her up to her room, reading her a story before bed and promising to be just down the hall if she was afraid.

Not that she ever was. No, Mischa had a lion's heart. She just disliked being alone, and didn't understand why it wasn't appropriate to share a room with her beloved brother. She had never questioned that she was safe with him - and safe from him, naturally - something their parents did with regularity.

Even now, he knew his father watched from the doorway, afraid that Hannibal would turn on his little cub.

He'd woken up on this particular morning with a fond smile before ruffling her curls and tickling her until she was breathless. Downstairs he'd heard his mother cooking breakfast, and they'd gone down together, hand in hand. Mischa's fever had gone down and their mother had given permission for them to go outside, so they'd spent the afternoon in the snow, building a castle while Hannibal made up a story about a great and powerful ice queen who made the world stop with a flick of her wrist.

At lunchtime they'd gone back inside, red-nosed and happy, eating before heading to the study to work on their assigned lessons. Simonetta had been homeschooling them both since the troubles had started, but often Mischa colored instead of reading as she was told, and they all indulged her in that.

Later that evening they'd gone to bed, and the ritual repeated itself.

And in two weeks, Grutas would shoot his father in the face, a storybook monster come to ruin their lives, to steal away the only light Hannibal had ever known.

He can feel the first hints of dread climbing up his spine, teasing across the vertebrae, settling in at the base of his throat. With it comes the hollow absence of Will, an awareness that he cannot feel him anywhere, not even a distant thrumming. Wherever he's gone, Will is out of his reach, and however it grieves him Hannibal cannot focus on that. Not now, not when he's

been given a chance to hold his darling girl again. When he could save her.

The gods won't pry her from me again. They wouldn't dare.

His fingers tighten against her hair, unthinking, and it is this that wakes her, low voice grousing at him as her small body burrows closer, stubbornly denying wakefulness. Hannibal can hardly breathe, but he tries. *"Darling girl."* He feels no shame in the way his voice breaks, because the love he feels for Mischa is the only pure, untouched thing he's ever experienced in his life, and he could never deny that. Could never deny her, even as she raises her head and looks at him with confusion, sensing his distress.

"You smell so sad, Hannibal." With no hesitation she wiggles upward and buries her nose at his throat, wrinkling it once she pulls away. "And happy too."

"I am happy, little Mischa. So happy that I am also sad."

"Why?"

"Because I had a nightmare, sweet girl. But you chased it away."

A nightmare, yes, but a dream too. A hope I never thought to fulfill, with Will in my arms by his own volition, shaking and soaked to the skin in blood, pliant and vulnerable. Surrendering, finally. And now... it is a struggle, but Hannibal has spent decades learning to compartmentalize his feelings. And right now, however much it pains him, he must put thoughts of Will away.

He'll understand.

Hannibal allows himself this one day to pretend that everything he knows is not true. Just this one. But in the back of his mind, he's already planning. Carefully deciding just how he's going to punish the men who are coming to take away everything. *But they will not succeed, not this time. And they are going to pay for their presumption.* ***Properly***.

He cannot say he's afraid. It is a foreign emotion to him, though he's felt some form of it over the years since he first lost Mischa. Even he isn't immune to instinct. But unlike the rest of the world Hannibal has trained himself to accept uncertainty for what it is - and to know that he will best any situation, no matter what it might be. And there's no mistake, the impending meeting with Grutas and his men? Hannibal is going to be the victor of that encounter. There is no other acceptable outcome. He has experience, and time, on his side. And a vicious desire to protect his beloved sister.

They don't stand even a hair's breadth of a chance.

As for the details, he begins to sort those out properly after he's read to Mischa and seen her safely to sleep. There's much to consider, and two weeks isn't a lifetime. That Grutas and his men will die is not even a question, but how? And there's Mischa, and her safety. She has to

be his priority. *Then you shouldn't risk her for revenge, Hannibal. You should just go.* It's Will's voice, a ghost of reason.

Just as easily he is summoned, still covered in blood, and so beautiful in his bed. "I cannot let them live. As long as they are alive, they are a risk to her. The only way to ensure they never harm Mischa is to be certain they are dead."

"So this *isn't* about pride?" Will is irreverent, as always, lying on his side with an eyebrow raised. But he's also serious. *What I wouldn't do to have you here with me now.* "Focus, Hannibal. You can find me later. Mischa first."

"Of course, you're right." *My voice of reason, always. You're the only one who has seen me well enough to know when I needed to be guided. Pushed. And you're the only one I would allow to do so.* Sighing, he finds himself wanting to reach across the space between them, to brush his fingers across Will's cheek.

But he knows that this isn't real, and it would only hurt to remind himself of that. He stares at the ceiling instead. "I can't say this isn't about pride, but for all my studies... I fear that time might try and force her death by their hands. If not now, then later. That it's fixed event I can only change by killing them first."

"I can't say I know much about time travel, but you might be right." Will shifts closer, restless. He's never been capable of stillness, relentlessly fidgeting away. When he speaks again, his voice is low, soft with worry - worry that Hannibal cannot bring himself to voice, but can allow Will to do so for him. "But that means she'll be here when they are. That's a risk too, a great one. You can't send her away now, there's too much snow outside."

"I know."

"And your parents wouldn't agree, either." He's only saying what Hannibal already knows, but there is comfort in speaking to him, working it out regardless. *There's no hurt in pretending that he's managed to come back with me, not in the dead of night, at least.*

"They would not." Indeed, they'd sooner send him away than their dear omegan daughter. *She is precious to them too, rightly so.* "I have thought of killing them both ahead of time, to simplify matters. Or to let them fall as they will when Grutas and his men arrive. I do not like leaving them as unpredictable variables in this."

Silence, before Will prompts him to speak again. "But?"

"My father must die. I will not be able to work around him. He is too soft, and he might stop me out of misplaced fear. My mother though, she might be spared. She won't present an obstacle to my finding you, once I've secured Mischa's safety. As an omega she'd fall under my care, as will Mischa. It would also be good for Mischa to have our mother." He's spent almost the entire day considering it, in the back of his mind, when he wasn't tending to Mischa. Drinking in her presence like it was the only thing that could sustain him.

He's surprised when Will sits up, shifts even closer. So close, but not quite touching, not

wanting to spoil the illusion. "You're coming for me then?"

"Do you doubt it?" Hannibal knows that his Will *would* doubt it. That if he's awake now, in his childhood bed, *aware*, he's likely expecting to be abandoned. His mind is too quick for his own good, he'd already have pieced together the basics and assumed that Hannibal needed to save Mischa, secure her life from harm. Trouble is, knowing Will, he'd *also* believe Hannibal intended to leave him for much longer than that. That he would only want the Will he'd known, and not the boy he'd been.

"You could leave me." *He's always been blind to how deep my devotion to him is.* "If I haven't fallen back to this time with you, I won't be the same. I won't be the man you loved, I wouldn't have been shaped by time and experience."

"And if you have come back, you will know I chose to leave you behind."

"I'd forgive you for it." He looks away, staring at the coverlet, and the sound of his honesty is a blade, even if he doesn't say it to be cruel.

"You are not optional to me, Will. I require you. And regardless of how aware you may or may not be... you'd want me to protect you. To keep you safe." That is the sterling truth, Hannibal knows. Will would want to protect the child he'd been, desperately. And he'd want Hannibal to do so in his absence, even if he never expected him to *actually* do so. He would *want* it.

Gruffly, Will peeks up at him from beneath his unruly hair, blood still oozing down his face. "When did you get so soft?"

"I believe you beat sentimentality into me, over the years." That earns him a laugh, at least. But the sound is a stinging slap against his awareness, a reminder that he might not have this again for a very long time, maybe never. That in gaining Mischa he might have sacrificed Will. *No. I can have them both. Perhaps not how it was, but what might we be instead, without the hurt and betrayal?*

"It wouldn't have taken years if you weren't so stubborn."

"I miss you, Will. Not having you... it *aches*." His breath hitches uncomfortably, but he allows it. Allows the tears studding his eyes. The pain of the moment. He won't permit such things under the light of day, but he can be weak here, with Will. *For* Will.

"I know, I know Hannibal." His smile is a painful thing. "But you're coming for me, once she's safe. You're even bringing me a mother as an apology."

"I am not-"

"You know that she will love me, the moment she sees me. You want me to have that." She will. Hannibal knows his mother very well, despite the many years she's been dead to him. She'll see Will, young and alone and so very brave in spite of all the pain he's endured - and Hannibal knows he has lived through much already, despite his tender years - and she will

love him on sight.

And Hannibal wants to give that to him, either to the man he loves or the boy he'd been. Either. *Both*. A mother who will love him, without reservation or hesitation. One who won't leave him. Simonetta Lecter is many things, after all, and she might be afraid of Hannibal, of what she's unleashed upon the world merely by birthing him, but she's *always* loved her children. Even him. He remembers her trying to get him and Mischa out of the house, after Grutas had come. Battered beyond sense, terrified and traumatized by the death of her husband, her *alpha*, and all that came after it, she'd still tried.

Hannibal had always admired courage. Had seen it for the first time in his mother's eyes as she attempted to hold back a man twice her size so that her children could run - *take her and go Hannibal! And kill whoever chases you!* - and it seems only right that he spare her the hand fate has dealt her.

Perhaps I want to save her for more than Mischa and Will.

She is my mother, after all.

Men Like That

Chapter Notes

Regular Text - English
Italics - Lithuanian

This chapter kind of fought me. Mostly because Hannibal makes me want to dive headfirst into purple prose territory, but it's so bulky and unnecessary (unless you are pretentious and also Hannibal. And me, no lie.) that I spent half my time editing just deleting most of it. Meh.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"Mongoose."

In her haste to scramble out of the room Mischa dropped her book right on the floor, bringing an almost-smile to Hannibal's mouth, though he was careful to conceal any reactions that he had. Dimly he could hear her clattering up the stairs like some kind of animal, but he supposed haste would serve her better than silence.

The walls were too thick for him to hear her progress down the long hallway to his room, but he knew that's where she was heading, exactly as he'd shown her.

With a soft, fond sigh he went back to his own book.

After twenty minutes had passed, he marked the page and set it down, taking the time to pick up Mischa's book - a volume of classic fairytales - and set it on the couch, on the off chance his parents came looking. Their father couldn't abide a mess.

Once that was done he made his way to the second story, wondering if she'd obeyed his instructions or if her young mind had coaxed her out early. This was the longest he'd ever left her during one of their 'drills' but he was confident that she was hidden away, just as he'd told her to be.

They'd started the drills a few days in to his... return? Hannibal would say mongoose, in English, and Mischa was to drop whatever she was doing and go to the hiding place he'd made from her, only coming out when she heard Hannibal say the word cobra. They'd started off slowly, only five minutes at a time, but Hannibal was aware of the fact that she'd need to hide for much longer than that if it came to a fight. Even longer if he failed to take out Grutas and his men.

Finding a place to stow her away was easy, at least. In a building as old as the Lecter Castle, it was designed very differently from its modern counterparts. They couldn't afford the luxury

of a whole floor for omegas at the highest point, it wasn't practical. Instead all of the bedrooms were equipped with 'nesting rooms', much smaller than the ones being built in the time he had left, hardly the size of a twin bed with low ceilings. Cramped and dark, utilitarian in function.

When he'd been arranging his room, there'd been no need to make any considerations for the small door leading to the nesting room, because he did not require a nest. As such his large poster bed was pressed right up against the door, concealing it from view entirely. With the bed raised up as high as it was, that first night he'd spared a moment to crawl underneath it - a tight squeeze for him, but manageable. That meant Mischa would have no problems crawling underneath.

All he'd needed to do was pry the door off of it's hinges and take it out to the barn, where he'd carefully cut it in half and rigged it with a strap. When the door was put back in to place, the bottom half of it could be opened without moving the bed. Someone Hannibal's size could never shimmy through the two foot wide opening, but Mischa was small and determined to 'win' at the game Hannibal had created for her.

Inside the nesting room, he'd begun stocking essentials - water, food, flashlights, candles for when the batteries failed. Toys too, and games. Books. Things that would keep Mischa occupied for some time. He'd told her only that it was a game they were playing, a secret she had to keep from everybody, even their mother. Mischa hadn't liked that at first, but at the same time she'd always been sweetly fond of knowing something nobody else did. That meant, should the worst happen, no one would know Mischa was there. She'd be safe.

It's still a risk.

I know, Will.

Will did not appear beside him as Hannibal approached his room and pushed the door open, but Hannibal could almost hear him in his head, concerned grumbling accompanied by the bite of nails.

With the bedskirt in place, there was no indication that a child was hiding in the room. Even Mischa's scent was damped now by an aloe salve he'd made for her to put on before she came into this space. It didn't cover it completely, but Grutas wouldn't be able to pinpoint her location.

"Cobra."

From underneath the bed, Hannibal could hear a faint giggle, followed by a bit of rustling as Mischa opened the door and poked her head out from underneath the bedskirt. *"I won!"*

"Yes you did, sweet girl." Helping her up, Hannibal removed a homemade candy from his pocket. *"Salted caramel, your favorite."*

"Did I do good?" Scooping her up and sitting on the bed with her in his lap, Hannibal could only smile as she unwrapped the sweet and nibbled on the edges. Most children would have

swallowed the whole thing down in seconds, but Mischa liked to take her time with things, to savor and enjoy them. He knew she'd probably be working on that same piece of caramel for the rest of the day.

"Perfect, Mischa."

"That was a long time, longer than before."

"I know. But remember what I said?"

"It's going to be longer, when we play for real. Right now we're practicing." She's so darling as she recites his instructions, taking on his tone in a way that is endearing rather than mocking. An earnest depiction of her beloved brother.

"Very good. And when it's real, what do you do, to help count the time?"

"I flip the hourglass, up to five times, and then I can come out and find you, but I have to be quiet."

"Very, very good. You're such a smart girl."

Briefly, her face twists and she looks down at the candy in her hand. *"Papa doesn't think so."*

"He's just jealous of your beauty and wit."

And I have no regrets about what is going to happen to him.

Another large part of his plan was preparing for the attack itself. With Mischa upstairs, safely concealed, Hannibal would be able to fight without hesitation. But Grutas and his men were battle-hardened soldiers, and Hannibal was too aware of his own, leaner frame. Two weeks wasn't enough time to train his body into responding the way he needed, which meant he'd need to use diversionary tactics to put them off guard. To startle and provoke them in to wasting their advantages.

He could remember the guns, the shining spread of maybe fifteen bullets between them as they'd counted their supply with dirty hands. That was before they'd thrown him and Mischa downstairs in the cellar, when they'd kept them all in plain sight. *If I can get them to use those bullets unwisely, we'll be on more even footing.*

Unlike his many other pursuits, he cannot say building traps and explosives was something he'd ever needed to know, but he knew the basics, enough to turn the ground floor of the Castle into a death trap.

In the quiet of the barn he built dummies that would shoot up with the careful tug of a rope or press of a lever. He made smoke bombs, to disorient them, and actual bombs packed with shrapnel to grievously wound them. He raided the attic for the antique weapons his parents

had moved up there when Mischa was born, and stowed them throughout the house.

Now, if only I could store boiling oil above the doorways. Rain down burning arrows upon them. Such things appealed to his sense of theater, but he knew he needed to be practical. Mischa might know the house will be trapped, but he wouldn't want her getting hurt. Nor did he want his mother stumbling into something in her haste to get away.

Simonetta was actually a more difficult piece to consider, when it came to planning. He could tell her to run, but would she follow Mischa? Would she ignore him and head straight for Grutas? When the violence started, would she panic? It was hard to say. He hadn't spent much time studying his mother, and it had been decades since she'd been alive. Judging her actions was proving to be difficult, more so when she was proving to be altogether more complex than he remembered or gave her credit for being.

He knew she was afraid of him - that he'd remembered, all these years later. But she had loved him too. Not in spite of himself, or even because of it. No, Simonetta just... loved him, without requirements or expectations. He had a memory of a time when he was very young, maybe seven, and he'd skinned his knee while playing in the yard. He'd been crying, surprised by the pain, and had gone to her because he knew that's what he was supposed to do. Even then, he was aware of the part he played.

Perhaps it was partially instinct that drove him to his mother, staring at her with wide eyes, crying but still so quiet, so still. But there'd been calculation there too, his 'person suit' already beginning to appear.

He unnerved her. He could see it, the way she'd taken a deep breath before reaching for his hand and taking him inside. She'd set him at the table, gently cleaned his knee and placed a band-aid there, before kissing the dressed wound. *"Why did you kiss my scrape, Mama?"*

"Because I love you, and want you to feel better." Carefully, she'd sat beside him, putting one arm around his shoulder and pulling him against her.

"It won't fix it." He'd been such a stern, serious child, and could remember how he'd frowned at her, confused as to why she'd acting in such a way. It didn't make sense.

He could feel her sigh again, knew that at times she didn't know what to do with her strange, unnatural son. But she always tried to explain things in a way he understood, which was more than anyone else he'd ever come into contact with had done. Rather than press him for being different, she simply changed how she approached him. *"Sometimes people do things because they want the other person to understand how they feel. So when I kiss your bumps and bruises, I am telling you that I wish you weren't hurt, and would make it better if I could. Do you understand?"*

"Yes, I think so."

It was jarring, being back in this place and seeing her again. Mischa had been so alive in his mind, always present, even when it hurt. But he'd allowed the memory of his parents to fade and feels now that it was a disservice - at least to his mother. His father proved to be just as

banal and common as he recalled, but Simonetta Lecter was... she was different. *I would see her survive this. See what she becomes without him there to keep her in the place he decided she belonged in.*

In the end, Hannibal cleaned out one of the kitchen cupboards. When Grutas came, while his father was outside, there would be time to hide his mother as he was setting the traps. Not much, but he could spare it. *I only hope she stays where I put her. It will be hard enough trying to keep the carnage out of the kitchen and I cannot spare any of my attention. I must be focused on Grutas in his men, and if she doesn't stay hidden, if she gets in the line of fire…*

The day comes. Hannibal's father goes outside, and in a parallel life Hannibal's world ends then, but this is not that life. As the count leaves the house *this* Hannibal is setting traps and shoving his terrified mother into the cupboard with harsh, whispered instructions not to leave it until he says.

He'd already shouted the codeword at Mischa, first thing, and he knew that she understood that the moment he'd been preparing for had come without needing to be told. She'd turn the hourglass over and would hopefully remain hidden until the worst of it was over. In the very least, she wouldn't hear the fighting, as the nesting room was soundproofed.

By some miracle, Simonetta remained in the kitchen, though Hannibal wouldn't be aware of that until later. His entire focus was on the alphas entering his home.

They wouldn't be leaving it alive.

He's breathing heavily, almost panting in time with the heavy throbbing of the wound at his side. Grutas is crawling away from him, the last alive, and Hannibal is trying to catch his breath, to say something - he wants to toy with the man, to keep him alive and suffering for days, weeks, *years*... but a shadow clouds his vision. He acts without thinking, raising the antique saber up only to freeze because it's up against the pale, smooth throat of his mother.

He can see the way her pulse thrums, how very fast it is. It would be too easy to cut through the surface of her skin. To make her bleed, just like the man at their feet.

She smells *terrified*, and at their feet Grutas gives a plaintive whine, thinking that with an omega present he's somehow been saved from the hell Hannibal has rained down upon them. He's about to finish the man, but his arm is shaking from the adrenaline and blood loss, and his mother takes the weapon from him easily - though she does so with caution, gently enough that he doesn't feel threatened by it even as she leads him several feet away to an overturned dining chair. She sets it upright and guides him until he's sitting down.

"What have you done, Hannibal?"

"There were going to kill Mischa. And you."

To his surprise, she doesn't ask him anything else, though he'd have forgiven her for being hysterical. But she does no such thing. Instead her face hardens and she turns back to the filthy, bleeding alpha on the floor. *"Men like that only know how to take. To hurt."* Her knuckles have gone white around the handle of the saber, and for a moment Hannibal thinks she might actually complete the job herself, sinking the blade into Grutas raw, weeping back, but she doesn't have to as the man succumbs to his injuries, dying without dignity on their dining room floor.

She turns back to him, dark eyes unreadable before she drops the sword. *"Let's get you cleaned up. Mischa is safe, yes?"*

"Of course." He pauses, leaning forward, suddenly exhausted. This moment had ruined him in another life, devastated him completely, and now he's almost numb from realizing that it won't *ever* happen. That such a large, key portion of his life, something that had defined him even as he'd struggled against it, was gone. Completely.

Strange too was the look on his mother's face, the *certainty* there. She hadn't doubted for a moment that he had protected Mischa, that the bloodbath he'd orchestrated was just.

She never asked about her husband. With the bond, she already knew.

Chapter End Notes

I don't know how we got to 'Hannibal is basically re-enacting Home Alone' but here we are?

I'm working on replying to all the comments. I've gotten so bad at it, but I'm also getting a lot more than I used to, so please forgive how slow I am. I assure you I read every single one and they all make me stupid happy!

ALSO. I elected to keep the violence out of this chapter - as I originally had it outlined we got to follow Hannibal as he murdered everybody but it just... it didn't fit. I KNOW. HOW DOES VIOLENCE NOT FIT IN A HANNIBAL FIC THAT IS ON BOARD WITH THE MURDER AND VIOLENCE AND I DON'T KNOW. It just threw everything off and didn't feel like it needed to be there. For Cliff it was different, it served a purpose, whereas in this story it was just violence for the sake of it, and I'm already shitty at writing violence so I just cut it.

ALSO ALSO. I hate that we don't have a canon name for Hannibal's dad. Hate it.

The Sorrow There

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Carefully covering Mischa's eyes as he carried her outside to the car, Hannibal made sure to take a route that avoided the bodies as much as possible. The faint smell of sulfur covered the worst of the odor, and the lack of a proper heating system no doubt helped dampen the scent of decay.

Once his various wounds had been tended to by his near-silent mother (he suspected she was in shock from the broken bond, but she was still responding and there was little he could do to help her here, regardless) he told her of his plan to take everything of value that they could and head to Paris: clearly, their country wasn't safe for them, not now.

Simonetta hadn't argued with him - it was easier to think of her by name, than to use that nebulous title, 'mother', so fraught with meaning - and together they'd begun the process of closing up the house. Most of the Lecter assets were kept in France, managed jointly between Hannibal's father and a lawyer that had known the family for years, but there were still many valuables within the home that would help fund their journey, as there wasn't much in the way of ready cash on hand.

Once everything was packed up in the car, he went to find Mischa.

As predicted, the darling girl had done exactly as he'd told her, falling asleep at one point with one of the flashlights on. He smiled at her fondly before gathering her up, and turned to find a solemn-faced Simonetta watching them both. For a moment it seemed like she'd speak, or move towards them, but the moment passed and she remained frozen in place until Hannibal moved past her, headed for the stairs.

It wasn't until Mischa was tucked into the backseat of the car that the woman who raised him spoke again, her voice warm and low. *"Those men... we will need to remove them, won't we?"* When she looks back into the open doorway, he's struck by the clarity of her profile, the snub nose and delicate mouth. The years had erased so much, and what time had not taken from him he'd willfully abandoned. Yet now he was presented with his past wholesale, and surprised to find that he'd genuinely forgotten what his mother looked like. *We have the same high cheekbones and fair hair, but she's softer than me. More like Mischa than anything.*

And her eyes... in this light they remind me of Will. The sorrow there, the miserable understanding.

"No, that won't be necessary."

She turns back to face him, blinking in surprise and licking her lips, clearly hesitant to speak out against him now that he is more or less the head of their household. *"But the bodies-"*

The tone she uses is a placating one, the very same voice she so often used when telling his father things he did not want to hear, and it strikes a nerve Hannibal didn't know he possessed, making him speak more sharply than he'd meant to. *"Lecter Castle is an old building. While most of it is stone, many of the materials used to add onto it over the years are extremely flammable."*

"You would destroy our home?" The words are so soft, they almost aren't there at all.

"We no longer need it." Another alpha might feel the need to memorialize the sight of such a historic victory, but Hannibal wants nothing more than to erase all traces of this place, and the bodies within. It doesn't matter that he's saved Mischa, his family home will always be haunted by memories of the past. But he isn't completely unfeeling. He knows that she surely is distressed by the loss of her mate and, now that the threat has been eliminated, he finds he wants to offer her some kind of comfort. The only kind he knows. *"We can look for father, if you'd like."*

"No, he's gone. Whatever is left is just blood and bones. I do not wish to see him that way."

"Shall we, then?"

Deftly, with the same gentle touch he uses when handling Mischa, Hannibal helps Simonetta into the passenger seat of the car before they begin their long journey to Paris. He knows it will be easy to find Robertus there, that the man had recently settled in the city with Murasaki, but he has resisted any attempts to plan for what comes next. Does he track down Will right away? Wait and see if he, by some miracle, comes to France aware and knowing? Or should he fly to America alone and steal him away in the night?

His healing side itches the entire week and a half that it takes them to reach France, but he studiously ignores it, choosing to distract Mischa instead with games and books. When it's his turn to drive his mother often curls up in the back seat with her daughter, offering her own distractions. He can't help but be soothed by their soft voices as Simonetta reads and Mischa excitedly interrupts her, the sight of them alone calming in a way he hasn't experienced in a very long time. It isn't like the peace he found with Will, when just being near him made him feel both alive and so safe at the same time. Like he could be soft, and it would not hurt him.

This is... different. Seeing Simonetta and Mischa all he can feel is a glowing sort of pride, satisfied with the knowledge that he had protected them. That he was protecting them still.

So far Simonetta had been very quiet when not caring for Mischa, spending long hours staring out the window, silent and still, but Hannibal felt she was dealing with the savage rendering of her bond very well, considering. He could remember many cases where omegas who lost their mates violently had gotten hysterical, screaming and scratching at their skin until they had to be sedated so that they didn't harm themselves further. Omegas that tried to end their lives with everything they had, unable to cope with the loss.

There were also those who began to Waste, collapsing into their grief, refusing to eat or

sleep... but Simonetta was merely quiet, almost eerily calm. Hannibal wondered if that was because her marriage had been arranged, a partnership rather than something born of blood and passion. It made him think of Will, and how he might have endured such a break. *Likely with the same stoic determination that he faced everything else with.*

The survival of his mother makes the transfer of the Lecter estates and wealth, as well as access to their townhouse, remarkably simple, and Hannibal is pleased. The lawyers are more than sympathetic to their plight and are *extremely* helpful when it comes to securing the various services Hannibal requires to make their stay in Paris as easy as possible. He hires an interior designer to come and decorate their home in a style more suited to his tastes, as well as a thoroughly vetted nanny for Mischa and a maid for his mother who is also experienced in caring for omegas who have lost their mates.

He also hires a private investigator to track down Will.

Hannibal had given it a lot of thought, but in the end... he cannot leave Will behind. He feels his absence in every thing that he does, often turning to speak to him only to find that Will isn't there, and remembering that is a sting that does not lessen. He isn't anywhere Hannibal can find him, though the boy he'd been is located soon enough. After three months the report comes in, and it's more revealing of Will's circumstances than he'd have expected. Neglected, not abused but certainly mistreated. Bullied. Often left alone for days at a time. The investigator left no aspect of Will's life to the imagination, and it makes for grim reading. Twice Hannibal has to pause and unclench his hands, which grip the paper so tightly it's creasing and tearing at the edges.

If by some miracle Will *is* aware, then he would know that Hannibal chose to leave him in that situation, and that is unacceptable. If he's not... Hannibal would go regardless. Because he knows that his lost mate would wish him to do so, and he intends to honor that, though Hannibal can admit there's no small amount of selfishness to his choice.

He doesn't want to live without Will.

If he must live without him, then he wants to devour this rare chance to see Will as he had been, unspoiled by the likes of Jack Crawford and men like him, who only saw a tool they could exploit with no regard for the damage that it caused Will to be used in such a manner. He wants to see what he could become, when protected and loved and cared for at such a vital point in his development.

Unfortunately, there is a small setback in his plans. The maid who tends to his mother informs him that she's expecting, and in a fragile state.

It's with reluctance that Hannibal decides to stay until she is safe to travel, but only a month later tragedy strikes and Simonetta loses the baby.

She's *devastated* by the loss, her grief an unholy thing that shrieks and sobs, leaving her eyes red-rimmed and puffy for days at a time. Weeks, even. It's concerning, and unsettling, to see

her in such a way. Especially after she had handled everything else with such grace and composure. Hannibal isn't entirely sure what he can do for her, but the maid (who is a nurse, in her own right, though Simonetta is unaware of this) assures him that Simonetta's response is very typical for a bonded omega who has already lost her mate. *She's in mourning, sir. For more than the child.*

Robertus, knowing of Hannibal's intentions to move to America for a fresh start, offers to take Simonetta into his household until she is well enough to travel. Perhaps it is weak of him, but Hannibal is unnerved by the angry wraith posing as his mother, a woman he'd so recently recovered from his past and found he did not want to lose after all. He doesn't like seeing her so undone and it makes it all too easy to accept his uncle's offer. *And when she's well, she can join us in America. The change will do her a world of good, I'm sure.*

Determined to seek out Will now that his mother's care has been seen to, Hannibal and Mischa board a plane to New Orleans.

Chapter End Notes

Sorry these chapters are so short! I'm busy this month, and struggling a bit with this story. I keep changing the outline even though I should just leave it alone.

Instinct Clashing With Knowledge

Chapter Notes

LISTEN. My dudes, listen. While I could make a stab at making Will's dialogue look butchered as hell, I am certain I can't do it with any authenticity, and I don't want to give anybody the same headache Hannibal has trying to understand the words coming out of that child's mouth. So we're just gonna pretend that everything Will says has been filtered through the garbage disposal and you'd have better luck understanding a raccoon, and go along on our merry way, yes?

Oh, and I might have vaguely looked at a map while writing this, but the location of Hannibal's historic manor is 100% not a real place. I just saw 'Nola Riding Academy' and could not even help having him live near there. It was too good.

Also, kind of a side note... but I'm not happy with the last two chapters. They're short, and the quality isn't what I expect from myself. And knowing why doesn't really change that fact, so in the future I'm probably going to give in to the urge to re-write them. I'll let ya'll know if I do, but I thought I'd give you a heads up. It honestly isn't even the story giving me trouble so much as real life issues causing problems - namely, I'm disabled and pain management isn't always smooth sailing. I've debated cutting back to only two updates a month but I'm undecided on that, for now.

Anyway, hope you enjoy this chapter, it was fun to write and Mischa remains AWESOME. But Bill is also awesome? Who knew?

See the end of the chapter for more notes

They stay in a beautiful hotel, close enough that they can both see the lurching, muddy grey waters of the Mississippi from the window in the morning. It's a graceful grand dame of a building, quiet despite the location and near enough to several museums and parks that it is all too easy to keep Mischa occupied while Hannibal looks for a home that will suit him - and the family he intends to build within it.

For her part, Mischa is delighted by the change, by the birds and the sky and the richness of the culture surrounding them. She thrives under the warm sun, fair skin turning gold after hours spent wandering in the care of her very qualified nanny, and has very quickly picked up on the language despite her tender years.

The hunt continues for the next few weeks, not fruitless, but not yielding much in the way of results either. He finds himself annoyed and greatly hampered by the lack of internet - it isn't as though he can pull out his tablet and do a quick search. Instead he must rely on soft newspapers with grainy photos that stain his fingertips and brief, misleading descriptions written by sunny real estate agents who would likely promise him the entire sun if it meant

making a sale.

Still, his preoccupation with finding a suitable residence serves as a distraction from What To Do About Will, something that takes up a great deal of time behind the inner sanctum of his thoughts. He knows he isn't in the city presently, that New Orleans isn't a place that has touched the Will Graham of this life, but he knew he would be drawn here, and soon.

The timing was right for his father to be moving on now that he'd completed the required rehab and taken the parenting classes needed in order to return Will to his questionable care, and while Hannibal had no sure way of knowing, he was confident that William Graham Sr would be drawn here.

It was, after all, where his absent wife and alpha lived.

And wasn't that strange, seeing the woman who was such a conspicuously blank space in the life of Will Graham; her absence a heavy hand simply because he had nothing to fill that space with. No small details to at least temper the abandonment. Just nothingness, and uncertain silence.

The brief meeting happened by complete chance, for once not a clever machination, but Hannibal would have known those delicate features and soft curls anywhere, even if he hadn't seen her photo in the report he'd been given. She'd taken her new family to Woldenburg Park, doting on her heavily pregnant wife while their young daughter scampered around the water and laughed at the birds she chased into flight.

The girl was younger than Mischa, but not by much. Maybe four. Idly he wondered if Will ever knew her, or knew of her. Had he ever gone searching for this piece of his life? The part that had been denied to him before he'd even had a chance to know it for himself? Knowing Will, he hadn't allowed himself to look. He respected the boundaries of others too much to violate them in that way - he'd reason that, since she'd left, his alpha mother had no desire to know him. He wouldn't have sought her out.

But that doesn't mean he didn't know what became of her. Will's mind was too keen, he wouldn't have been able to help making idle connections, and he'd lived here at some point, in the same city. It isn't hard to imagine him as a young beat cop, cruising through a wealthier neighborhood and seeing her out on the porch, seeing off a guest or just coming back in after a long day at the office. Hannibal wondered how much that had hurt, seeing her. Knowing she was happy without him.

That she'd probably forgotten him in his entirety.

Though how anyone could forget Will Graham was a mystery to Hannibal. He was sure, even in his beginnings, that he had been beautiful and captivating. Just as he was sure now, from the few photos he'd seen, that a young Will Graham was no less interesting. And this child offered Hannibal such a rare gift, a thing he could not begin to imagine the value of: a chance to know Will before he really became himself.

Just what would Hannibal find, when he managed to orchestrate a meeting between them?

Had Will already been damaged by callous hands and his father's neglect? Had he known violence, even at so tender an age? What did Will see, without all of the protective barriers he'd learned to build by the time they'd met? Just who *was* Will Graham? What were the humble halls of his beginning?

Before he could begin to find out, he needed the appropriate bait.

A lure that would draw the father in, with the son not far behind him.

Something like an aged mansion on the outskirts of the city, greatly in need of repair.

The sort of job a vagabond handyman like William Graham Sr. wouldn't be able to refuse.

It's a stately thing, his new house, situated near Lake Cataouatche and bordering the Jean Lafitte National Historic Park and Preserve. Isolated, abandoned for decades, it was nevertheless of solid construction with the bones of what would become the ideal home for one such as him. Hannibal could almost see it now, peeking out of the swamp in a sudden burst of white and marble, with graceful white pillars, an open porch in the back, and high, wide windows on all sides. An indulgence in neoclassicism, but modernized. It would be something beautiful - a soft, quiet shelter removed from the prying eyes of the world, backed by wild swampland.

An oasis.

The restoration would take time, however, and he had no intentions of beginning the work until Will's father could be secured to do it, which meant that Hannibal rented a temporary home for himself and Mischa a little closer to civilization in a neighborhood few who knew him before would ever suspect him residing in.

Not that it was questionable - he'd *never* subject Mischa to that sort of environment - merely that it was... ordinary. Domestic, and a little more on the poorer side. In short, it was exactly the kind of neighborhood the elder Graham would gravitate to - close to the water, cheap, and filled with people who wouldn't look too closely at his home life.

He'd want that, after losing Will again so recently. Stability, and less nosey neighbors.

Again Hannibal found him wondering about the little boy, the seed of the man who had changed him so completely. By now he'd adjusted to the local dialect, and found it rather charming - would Will sound that way? The soft slurring at the edges? A gentle twang on the vowels? The few photos he had couldn't convey the *sound* of him, couldn't show if he had already begun slouching or if his temper was still sharp and cutting when the mood struck him.

Even the report, generous as it was, couldn't tell Hannibal if the essence of Will Graham would still be the same.

Regardless, he found himself flipping through it again after tucking Mischa in for the night.

Subject is ten years old, with curly brown hair and blue eyes. Slender build, underweight.
Squints while reading - an indication that he is likely farsighted though he does not wear glasses.
He spends most of his time reading, either at home or at the local library.
Teachers describe him as very intelligent, but quiet.
Very isolated, has no known friends though he is not bullied by his peers.
Described as different and strange. Even as a changeling.
On one occasion was seen feeding stray dogs near the pier, is known for such behavior.
Alone for most of the day, and sometimes night. Father works odd jobs and is an alcoholic.
Unpresented omega, without any current prospects or contracts.
Speaks English and passable Creole French.

It isn't a paltry sum, compared to the knowledge of Will he'd possessed before, but it still gives him no solid indication of just what he'll find, and it is most disagreeable. But Hannibal won't have to wait much longer - the private investigator had already sent him another report, brief, but possessing the words Hannibal has so longed to read: the Graham family is en route to New Orleans.

Though instinct is demanding that he track Will down *immediately*, Hannibal is too skilled a hunter for such a rash, impulsive move. Instead he waits, careful. Giving the Graham men time to settle in before fate smiles upon him in the form of a flyer three weeks later.

It's a faded thing pinned on a bulletin board at the front of a local repair shop - handwritten, rather than printed, but there are photos attached, examples of the man's work. *Perfect*. Hannibal restrains himself enough not to call for another week and is rewarded with the presence of Bill Graham the next morning, surveying the ruin Hannibal had purchased.

His brow is furrowed, the lines marring what is otherwise a rather delicate profile. They're there even when he isn't frowning, hard and unforgiving. He has not aged well and Hannibal doesn't doubt the absence of his bonded mate has only made things worse for the man.

William Graham Sr., 'call me Bill', is an *omega*.

That is more surprising than Hannibal had anticipated. For all their long discussions, he'd always assumed that the man was a beta, perhaps an alpha but most assuredly not an omega. Such a thing just didn't seem possible given the very conservative believes still present within the time period and the location, yet Bill Graham made no efforts to hide himself, to be anything other than what he was. His unapologetic nature reminded Hannibal of Will, painfully enough. The refusal to cater to societies capricious rules and whims.

Apparently, stubbornness was a thing Will gleaned from his father.

"You certainly picked a right mess to start with, Mr. Lecter." He hasn't made eye contact yet, choosing to study the walls and floors, testing the strength in the doorways. He doesn't seem

pleased with what he's found, nor is he displeased. Hannibal suspects Bill is simply unhappy with life in general. "She's solid enough, but this floor is a wreck. Gonna have to tear it all out. Drywall too, it's no good. Place needs a full gut job."

From what Hannibal can discern, Bill Graham is somewhat like Will. He possesses a keen understanding, a knowledge of how the men and women around him work, though not quite at the levels that Will operated at. Perhaps that's why he is so uneasy around Hannibal, taking care to keep his distance, too aware of the isolation surrounding them. *He doesn't trust me... but he does. It confuses him, to know that I am dangerous but not a danger to him. I wonder what he'll make of it later, the war within him - instincts clashing with knowledge.*

"I am not afraid of a little hard work, Mr. Graham, and I am more than willing to pay for the quality I desire."

Bill grunts, toeing at a piece of broken ceiling tile on the floor. "I can take the job, but I want to hire my own crew. Handle everything myself." He seems poised for an argument - not unexpected, given his secondary gender. No doubt Bill has had plenty of alpha clients balk at the idea of an omega foreman, sexism demanding an alpha be in charge of such work. Yet he persists, regardless of the censure laid upon him. It's admirable.

"You seem very knowledgeable, I trust your judgement. How long before we might move in? I know that the house itself will not be complete for some time, but when will it be livable?"

"Gimme at least six weeks, give or take. You can move in then but I can tell you now, active construction sites aren't exactly peaceful."

"It won't be a concern, and I'll be sure to keep Mischa away from your crew."

"That your omega?" Bill winces the moment the blunt words leave his mouth. They both know he's trying to reassure himself that Hannibal doesn't have any personal designs on him, that his interest comes from self-preservation.

"No, my younger sister. She's five and very curious."

"Where are your parents, if you don't mind my asking?"

"My mother is in France, recovering from an... illness." Though he wishes otherwise, he still stumbles on the word. Simonetta's vacant gaze suddenly appearing in his mind's eye. "My father passed recently, and I thought a change would be best for us all."

Refreshingly enough, the man does not offer a hollow apology for said loss, merely nodding to himself. "She'll be alright, your ma I mean. Broken bonds aren't fatal no matter what the dang doctors like to say." The smile he offers is one of pure bitterness, but there is commiseration there too.

"You lost your mate, then?"

"You could say that." It's occurred to Hannibal that Bill might think he's interested in the man

personally, and he can see that he's right as Bill winds himself up to be as off-putting as possible - another echo of Will. "I'll tell it to you straight, I left her. She hated what I was, what our boy was. Maybe if he'd been an alpha she'd have toughed it out, but she missed her old life, her family. The money too, though she was good enough not to say it outloud. They cut her off when we bonded. So I did her a favor, took my son and left." He shrugs then, shoulders high and tight. "Don't need an alpha meddling in my life."

"I assure you, it's your skills as a carpenter that hold my interest, Mr. Graham."

They shake on their agreement then, both pleased with the outcome.

Now, to engineer a way for Bill to bring his son here.

There are setbacks in construction, to the point where they cannot move in until nearly April. By then the swamps have flooded the property, creeping right up to the edge of the yard, and on moving day he finds himself slogging through heavy mud in galoshes while Mischa excitedly jumps through the various puddles. Bill has assured him that the fencing he's put in will be a deterrent to any wildlife, in particular alligators, and that she's safe enough in the front where they can keep an eye on her.

Unfortunately, Hannibal has not managed to find a way to secure Will's presence. Bill has, in the very least, spoken of his son, but always in clipped, careful sentences designed to give as little detail as possible without seeming rude or secretive. It's frustrating, but Hannibal resists the urge to involve himself further.

Now that he knows of Bill's nature he has no intentions of setting him off - the man might bolt in the dead of night and tracking Will down would be difficult then, not to mention he'd be wary of strangers if his father chose to warn him off. Better for Bill to bring him along on his own... with gentle coaxing.

The opportunity comes a few days later, once everything is unpacked. The nanny has been given a week off to go and visit her sister in Delaware, which means Mischa is spending most of her time alone or with Hannibal. He tries to keep her occupied, but her loneliness is apparent to Bill, who sits on the steps with her whenever he can, talking calmly and kindly, taking interest in what she says. The two have become fast friends and he even carves her a little dancing rabbit out of a chunk of wood.

"Say, Hannibal?"

Today they're working on the front pillars, installed in the front of the house and hand carved from marble. Bill had nearly rolled his eyes at the expense, at the way Hannibal had *insisted* on going to the quarry and picking out the stone himself, but the finished product will be beautiful and the other man cannot deny that, no matter how ridiculous he thinks Hannibal is for wanting them in the first place.

"Yes?" Mischa is asleep on the window seat installed in the study, and Hannibal has been

going over his notes. He plans to attend school sometime in the Fall, studying art history, but has not ceased his studies in the meantime and has been reading a biography on Dante for most of the morning.

When Bill says nothing further Hannibal looks up from his book, taking in the way the other man stands awkwardly in the doorway, dark eyes on the ground as he runs a hand through his perpetually messy black hair. "Did you need something, Bill?"

"Just... it's gonna be summer soon. I was wondering if you wouldn't mind my bringing my boy around once school is out. He's helpful, won't get in the way of anything." He sighs, glancing at Mischa. "Might be good for Mischa to have somebody to play with too. He's older, but he's a lonely kid. Might do them both some good, you know?"

"That would be wonderful, Bill. I confess I worry about Mischa's isolation. She's picked up on the language, but there's still a barrier there. It would be nice for her to have a friend here."

Hannibal is nervous. He doesn't quite no what to expect from this young version of Will and wakes before the sun rises, unable to help the instinct demanding that he make his home comfortable and welcoming for his prospective mate. He remembered feeling this way before, after he'd first coaxed Will to his house in Baltimore. The need to make sure everything was perfect, and soft. Inviting. He'd wanted Will to feel safe with him - and not solely because it was such an effective tool to manipulate him with.

It's no different now.

By the time Bill's truck pulls into the driveway ahead of his crew, just at the edge of dawn, Hannibal has just put the finishing touches on a simple but homey breakfast - blueberry pancakes, scrambled eggs, bacon, homemade biscuits and gravy... it isn't what he'd have preferred to make, but he doesn't want to overwhelm the boy with his more exotic culinary delights.

As it is Bill raises an eyebrow at the offering when Hannibal opens the door and welcomes them inside.

Mischa is already at the table, sticky syrup smeared across her appled cheeks. "Bill! Hi Bill! Hannibal made pancakes!"

"I can see that, Mischa." Putting an arm around Will’s narrow shoulders, he ushers him forward. "Mischa, this is my boy here, Will. I told you about him before, remember?"

"Will! I remember. He likes dogs and fishing for crawdads." Polite girl that she is, and not one for shyness, Mischa scrambles out of her seat and heads straight for Will, nearly bowling him over in the process of holding out her hand for him to shake. She's learned that this is how Americans greet one another and is most enthusiastic about it. "I'm Mischa Lecter."

"Hi Mischa, it's nice to meet you."

Whatever he'd been expecting... Hannibal is soundly shaken from said expectations with the reality of Will. He's all coltish limbs and windswept curls, with eyes that seem too wide for his thin face. But it's the way he sounds that's truly... well, appalling.

He sounds *awful*. Like somebody took the English language, and a smattering of French, and mixed it up in a blender. His voice is all soft, rounded edges, with sudden sharp streaks that make him almost impossible to understand.

Hannibal had thought he had a firm grasp on the Southern accent, the lilting twang to it - even in the airport there'd been adjustments made to his understanding of how those in Louisiana had adapted it specifically, but this... it was like Will had crawled straight out of the Bayou with no idea how to speak to another human being. This is *not* how Hannibal had envisioned their first meeting, unable to grasp more than one word in ten that he spoke.

Even Bill, who admittedly had a rather heavy accent, might as well have been speaking the queen's English in comparison.

Little Mischa wrinkled up her nose, utterly pleased and charmed by the garbled sounds leaving Will's pink mouth. "I like that! You talk different like me. Come on, come sit down! Hannibal made pancakes, he *never* makes pancakes because they aren't *fancy* but he *did* and you have to have some!"

While Mischa spirits Will away to the other end of the table, loading up a plate for him that is almost a comically high tower by the time she is finished, Hannibal manages to arrange his expression into something that isn't mild horror. "You're welcome to join us, Bill. I made enough for everyone, even the crew."

"Uh huh. Just don't go rubbing all the rough off my kid, alright Hannibal? I saw that face."

Hannibal wisely chose not to comment.

Chapter End Notes

Oh, and if you want to find me on tumblr, or like, reblog my post about this chapter, have at it: https://justfoundreligion.tumblr.com/post/179027418476/show-chapter-archive

End Notes

I'm honestly guessing at how long this is going to be? I'll add ratings and tags as they become relevant, but this is Hannibal, so it's going to get dark. Probably some underage, like with Cliff. I've already set it so comments have to be approved, I'm just going to spare myself the headache of that now rather than pitch a fit later. Please keep in mind that this is going to be a different story than Cliff, an AU of an AU so to speak, and this is the unaware!Will version/aware!Hannibal version in this series.

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!